

Family Involvement

Look at family involvement as a continuum. There are various ways in which this can be achieved by looking at areas in which it can occur:

1) Parenting

Family involvement at the most basic, most important level; caring for their child, nurture child's development, establishing a routine, modeling problem solving, attending the child's activities.

2) Personal Development

Taking advantage of and creating opportunities for self growth; reading a newsletter, requesting and using parent to parent match, going to a support group, attending workshop or training.

3) Participation

Providing input by participating in planning and policy development activities – providing a family perspective on what is needed and what works to agency personnel. This is what many agencies see as family involvement.

4) Planning and Implementing Family Support Activities

Moving beyond personal needs to organize and plan activities for other families; facilitating support group or meeting, contributing to newsletter, being a parent mentor; family members are capable of providing trainings to other families, organizations, agency personnel, and professionals.

5) Policymaking and Community Development

Partnering with professionals and other parents with decision-making authority to take action within the community and the state to recognize, mobilize, and increase community assets to enhance opportunities for children with special needs. Write, call or meet, work with legislators regarding policy-impacting families, working on systems change such as designing a model for service coordination.

Family Involvement is most productive when Parents and Professionals and other community members come together in true partnership and collaboration to take action on specific issues within the community or the state that will enhance the quality of life there.